THE

BIBLE OR ATHEISM,

BY

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To the Young Soldiers of the South:

While the writer dares not trench upon the peculiar duties of the sacred office, yet he may seek to offer to those, who like himself, are oftener thrown within the vortex of a world's skepticism, than the members of the clergy, some thoughts which may be of value, in aiding young men to resist the assaults of error, on the one hand, and to embrace that system of truth on the other, which it should be our primary purpose to maintain and establish.

I say 'young men,' for I well know how prone are such to the delusions of a supposed rationalism, which presumptuously claims to be able to fathom the unsounded depths of the Divine Omniscience, and to grasp the unknown elements of the Divine reason.

Young Man! my object is to warn you of your danger; to point out the true method of religious investigation; to lead you by its adoption to the only solution of that most solemn question, which haunts us in our day-dreams, which breaks in with solemn note upon our revels, which speaks to us in the day's business, which whispers to us in the night's stillness; which, banish as we may—avoid as we may—take, though we may, the wings of the morning and flee into the uttermost parts of the sea, Omnipresent still is there, pressing for its answer, and yet with angel wings, hovering in mercy over us!

Who has not heard the question from within—by whom asked, he knows not—What am I now? and what shall I be hereafter? How few have answered it at all! How many evasively! How few honestly! How many drown the voice of the earnest querist, that they may frame an answer which will serve the present moment, and avoid that response whose joyous echo shall resound forever!

How many young men have I seen fight their way from the camp of Christianity, into the tents of Infidelity, and even atheism! and answer the question thus: "Dust I am—to dust I will return!" How many turn from the peaceful ways of the Christian's life, to the

dreary gloom of a cheerless materialism, from the calm unperturbed tranquillity of the one, to the feverish delights, or the revulsive melancholy of the other!

If to our reasoning upon religion, we apply the same principles which we employ to guide us in other investigations, I venture the affirmation, that our conclusions will place us upon the firm and stable ground of the Christian's faith. The error, which is committed by free-thinking unbelievers, is, that they cover themselves with the vestments of a cast off and worn out philosophy, which they would shame to throw around any of the sciences, of which the world now boasts. They insist upon testing religious truth by the standard of their religious theories, while they test other truth by the facts upon which it is found to depend. In religion, they begin at their conclusions, and reason back to their postulates—while in physics, they start with established postulates, and advance to their conclusions. Apply the system in vogue in physics, to religion, and the sway of Christianity would be as universal as the progressive advancement of the physical sciences. On the other hand, apply to physics, the system of reasoning adopted by Infidelity in opposition to Christianity, and you would quench the blazing light of the mid nineteenth century, in the superstitious gloom, and theoretical fancies of the dark ages! Let the principles then, on which you search the secrets of nature, be those on which, with reverential step, you seek to learn something of nature's God!

I need not do more than refer to the fact, that the principles of the Greek philosophy were superseded by those of the Baconian; that while the former was subtle, refined and theoretic—the latter is experimental as to its foundations, careful in its inductions, and practical in its conclusions. The one jumped to its conclusion, and then eagerly sought the means of proving it; and thus while the logical sequence of its propositions may have been perfect, the conclusion itself may have been untrue. The other searches for its postulates, establishes them as facts, and then inductively reaches its conclusion, which is safe and true, because logically deduced from premises experimentally proven.

Let me illustrate, by examples, the pernicious use of the old system of investigation, when applied to the subject of religion.

Mr. Hume had settled in his own mind the untruth of the christian system. He believed in the existence of a God, with the attributes, ordinarily conceded, as belonging to Him. A system of teach-

ing came to him with internal and external demonstration of its divine origin; the former in the teachings themselves, the character of the teacher, His life and His death,—the latter in the miracles He wrought, and the wonders He performed. These last were attested by eye witnesses, to all appearance, credible, capable, and sincere. If believed, his infidelity was folly, and faith became his duty; for the miracles, if true, constitute conclusive proof of the revelation, they are designed to authenticate.

Now, Mr. Hume, theorizes, that to believe such things as miracles is irrational, because it is impossible to prove them; and being therefore incredible, teachings resting their claim to divine origin upon alleged miracles, may still be only human, because there is and can, in the nature of the case, be no proof that they were ever performed. It is evident that Mr. Hume, in order to destroy the power of the argument from miracles, reasoned from his hypothesis of the untruth of christianity, to the conclusion that no miracles had been performed; (because had they been performed, the hypothesis of its untruth would have been false, and the conclusion of its truth inevitable;) and then still further to confirm the conclusion, which upon his hypothesis he has reached, he invents the sweeping dogma, that no miracle can be proved by *any* evidence. Thus instead of using the *direct inductive process*, that is, to consider the *sufficiency* of the *evidence*, to establish the existence of miracles (which is the matter to be established or overthrown, as a postulate,) he adopts the *retrospective* process, of arguing the *insufficiency* of the evidence, because of the *impossibility of proof;* or, in other words, the entire *non-proveability* of miracles. No wonder he establishes the falsity of Christianity, and of the miracles adduced to prove it. How can he do otherwise, when he *deduces his postulates* that no miracles are proved from the *assumption of its falsity*, and then *reversing the reasoning, proves its falsity* from *the postulates, so deduced?*

Look at its absurdity! That an omnipotent God *can* perform miracles, has not been, cannot, will not be denied. That such a Being, if he deemed it wise to do so, in order to induce belief by his creature in Him and His commands, should find it impossible to furnish proof of such miracles, it were vain, if not blasphemous to affirm. And yet, the argument of Mr. Hume, in full effect, denies to the Almighty, the power to *prove* to his intelligent creature, by *any evidence whatever*, extraneous to himself, the *fact* of the miracle which *He has performed, to influence his belief and to control his*

conduct. In other words, he concludes, that an important fact might exist, which God could not give evidence of to the creature of his Power! Common sense, the instinct of mind, revolts at such a conclusion.

But a more remarkable instance has recently appeared. Mons. Comte, in his positive philosophy, has, by an *apparently inductive* process, but by one as really retrospective as Mr. Hume's, brought his mind to the conclusion that there is no God! that the constancy of nature, her vast and illimitable empire under the quiet dominion of general laws, are proofs of *their eternity*, and of her *unoriginated grandeur*,—and with a perversity of intellectual acumen, singularly continental, the fact which satisfies the world that there is a God, satisfies the *French Savan* there is none.

Can any one fail to see, that with the atheistic belief taken as his stand point, he surveyed the works of creation "an undevout astronomer;" and in its wondrous plans, from which he excluded its more wondrous architect, could see only inherent and inevitable necessity. And, then, with this subtle poison thrown into his views of nature; law inherent, law fixed, as essentially hers, without which she could not have been, but is because it is hers inalienably if not eternally; how can the magician astonish any one in the secret of his necromancy, *when he proves from his postulates a conclusion which he had in reality assumed in order to prove them?*

These instances may suffice to show what is lamentably the truth, that where there is a will there is a way; that the deductions of the mind are the dictates of the heart, and that over mental operations, the will—man's supreme ruler—sways a sceptre which exacts obedience, abject and universal.

> "The heart aye—is the part aye
> That makes us right or wrong!"

Beware, young men, that your minds do not become the slaves of corrupt and rebel wills—making the imagination wild and wayward—blinding the reason—darkening the understanding—unseating the judgment—corroding the conscience—until your thoughts, words, and actions become only the manifestations of a perverse antagonism to the God who created you.

It is evident, that the religious idea must either have sprung from the human mind, as a creature of its own faculties; or have been communicated or implanted in the mind by some external influence.

It is either a mere idea, born of the soul itself; or is realized by the soul, from the perception of an object outside of itself.

Belief in God has been universal in the history of man.

It is true, as an universal fact, that among all people, nations and tribes, from the learned European to the besotted Hottentot; upon the icy continents of Arctic darkness, in the busy marts of Christendom, and amid the Islands of the sea; within the barred gates of Japan or the walls of China; with every other variety, there is one unity of thought—*Humanity everywhere believes there is a God!* Nay, more—in the morning of its birth, as far as tradition or history tells its story; in its infancy; in its heyday of glory; in the dark age of barbarism; from its cradle to its meridian prime; amid all other changes and revolutions; in religion, with an unbroken unity of expression—*Humanity still declares there is a God!* Nay, more—where science soars through the illimitable Empyrean, and sees immensity strewn with living, speaking worlds—grander and nobler than our own—and where ignorance only sees the blue tapestried for man's dwelling, spangled with bright jewels, which earth might hide in her own great bosom, whether the savan or the savage, in unity of chorus—*Humanity still proclaims there is a God!*

Now this universal belief, in every age, in every condition, of the the world's history is conclusive of the fact, that there is a God. It has banished the belief of the "No-God" from the world. Atheism is a non-existence among men; or so rare, as to find no place in human creeds.

But, if a God there be, how would belief in Him have become so firm and universal, had not God at some time in awful manner impressed the perception of his being upon mankind? Does not this unextinguishable and universal belief persuade us to the conclusion that God not only is, but that He has somewhere and in some age, communicated the fact to His creature? Does not this great fact prove His Being, and that it has been made known in a *primeval revelation?*

I concede that there are great evidences of His power and Godhead patent to the mind of all, *after the idea is once conceived*—but would these have generated this universal belief, had not God once spoken to man? The *source* of the idea of God in the world is one thing; the *evidence* which confirms it, is another.

Certain facts and phenomena in history, are inexplicable to me, except they prove, that the science of a belief in a God, is higher

than human reason, in that it is derived from the voice of God, speaking to man.

Permit us to examine some of them:

1. Where humanity can take but limited views of its relations to nature (as among the ignorant tribes of Africa,) there is no sufficient power of abstraction to deduce, by its reason, the conclusion of an invisible Creator; nor is there sufficient inventive power to conceive the idea irrespective of outward impressions; nor is their knowledge of nature so dignified in its character as to produce such grand conclusions. How does reason in such cases reach the idea of Deity? Is it not a tradition of the original revelation?

2. If reason be the guide to Theism, it would follow that, the wider the range which science gives to human thought, the grander the views of nature presented to the mind, and the more improved the reason, the clearer should be the conviction of the existence of a God!—and yet it is remarkably true, that in *Barbarism*, *Atheism* is unknown; and it only springs forth as the *fungus* of the learning, science, and philosphy of an advanced civilization.

3. The universality of the Theistic belief in all ages; *its strength* in the beginning of history, and its *influence* in the origin of society; its *permanent* and *continuing* strength and influence *now;* the moral hold it takes of human conscience, making a man even resist the efforts of reason to refute it—so unlike any other belief or idea in human history—would lead to the conclusion that it came to man in its origin, armed with a sanction so tremendous and producing such a sensation on the minds of the fathers of the race, that its very mention thrills every fibre of humanity now, and must do so eternally.

It is, indeed, no dream of human fancy—no conclusion from the terms of a human syllogism, but a fact manifested by divinity, in such a manner that, from age to age, history and tradition have handed it down to fill the wicked with terror and fear: the pious with devotion, reverence, and love.

4. But I argue, there must have been such a revelation, because the non-existence of it is so improbable—and if there was such a revelation, it was obviously the power of the idea of God in the world. Can any man tell me why, for 6000 years, our Creator should hide himself from his intelligent creatures? Why he should refuse a knowledge of Himself to those who search to know and to reverence, or who refrain from knowing, that they may do evil with

impunity? Why he should have withheld a revelation from our first parents (supposing our race had a beginning) groping their way through life to the tomb, with no teacher to tell of their origin, or to show them their destiny? Can any man, who believes there is a God, think thus of him?

Some speak of the possibility, some of the probability, some of the reasonableness of the revelation. I maintain if there be a God, (a fact not now denied, but admitted by universal human consciousness,) *there must have been a revelation.* No rational attributes can be attached to his being which would give the slightest pretext for the conclusion that, of purpose, God should never, in 6000 years, have spoken to his poor and needy creatures, who would aspire to know and to love him. As well blot out his being from the sum of human belief, as to assign to Him a character which revolts the moral instincts of his creatures.

5. History teaches there was a primeval revelation, and all traditions and fables confirm it. The oldest books in the world, the first written—are the books of Moses. I take them not now as revelations—I am willing, pursuing the inductive method, yet reserving my profound reverence for them as the books of God, to treat them merely as history, and their pretensions to Revelation as fables.

These books declare that the morning hours of our race were passed in near and intimate intercourse with the Creator. They tell of the strange communion of the writer of them with the God of Israel. They tell of wondrous laws on tables of stone committed to one people—a peculiar people then—made so by these alleged superhuman communications—a marked people now. They tell of food from heaven; of water bursting from the rock, stricken by the servant of God; of the pillar of fire and cloud; of the obedient waves of the Red Sea; of the miraculous Jordan passage; of the father of the faithful, his son, his sons' son, and generation upon generation, who heard and spoke to God. And, strange to say, the impression made by these strange old books, is a standing miracle in the world. For, while Plato, and Socrates, and Seneca are buried with all their followers, centuries ago, nearly thirty-five hoary centuries have failed to efface from the Jewish mind the belief, that amid the thunderings of Sinai the law was given to Moses, and that the Jehovah, whom they this day worship, is the God who spake to their law-giver, and to the patriarchs. Nay more—the believers in

Moses to-day are more numerous than they were thirty-five centuries ago!

What gave such a sanction to the precepts of Moses, that time will not, can not wear out, but seems only to strengthen? What stamped that eternal gravity upon the Jewish creed, which settles yet upon the brow of the son of Abraham when he dreams of the ploughed up Hill of Zion?

Can you answer the question in any other way than this?—*God did give the law to Moses*, and in the face of all the people, manifested his presence as its seal and its sanction.

But all other nations fill the pages of history and the ears of tradition with stories of Divine communications. Incredible to me, because their deities are merely human in intellect, and bestial, cruel, and debauched in passion. Yet, does not the fact, that sacred and profane history, written in the early ages of the world, record *traditional* stories of Divine apparitions, wonderfully increase the probability that they were made in *reality*—though many of these are but *travesties* of the *real*.

6. I advance another step—

It will be admitted that the only rational Theism is Mono-Theism. Nor will it be denied that no people have ever sanctioned it, save those who have adopted the *Mosaic system;* and that none who have adopted the *Mosaic*, have ever failed to sanction it. The Bible is the history of the war of mono-theism with poly-theism.

These facts show that the tendency of merely rational, or, I might say, human theology, is to poly-theism, and that the only resistant it has is the Mosaic system. As an historic fact, human reason, unconnected with the Mosaic record, has often turned from mono-theism to poly-theism—but has never turned from the many Gods to the one only living and true.

Now, if the mono-theistic creed be the true, then had any revelation been made it would have been of that creed. Now, to find this great system prevalent in our day amid the light and civilization around us, might not have surprised us. It might be urged that we had so far advanced as to be able to throw aside the errors of the opposing belief, and fight our way with reason's aid to the belief of the one God. But to find an enslaved people in the dawn of human history, breaking away from their masters, the worshippers of many Gods, to erect an altar to the one God in the wilderness—settling a new land, and hallowing it for more than twelve centuries with the

one God Jehovah's name—wandering a captive people in a strange land, and now an outcast race far and near, with this one creed in their hearts—these are facts which refuse all other solutions, except that the revelation of the unity of God was made to them, with such sanctions annexed as left an indelible impress upon this people to the remotest generation.

A knowledge of Mono-theism once acquired, may have been lost, as I have shown; but without the aid of Moses, has never been regained; while its existence, begun in the heart of Judaism, has continued for thirty-five centuries; and how upon the facts stated, it can be rationally explained, without the hypothesis of a revelation to them, that the Jewish people *alone*, *began*, *continued*, *and perpetuated Mono-theism*—how that it dates its rise with them, and by them has never been lost, I confess my inability to conjecture.

7. There is one other view, which should be added to those already presented. I think it will be found, that the Theistic truth has made its impression *less* upon the *reason*, than upon the *conscience* of man; a phenomenon, inconsistent with the idea, that it is obtained as a deduction of the reason. For while the reason is satisfied with the conclusion, that there is a God—yet human logic may be so shaped, as to throw a stumbling block in the way of reason's coming to this conclusion; and reason, when assiduously cultivated, has strangely reached the Atheistic, as the just conclusion from the facts. And I confess, that left to reason *alone*, I doubt whether the argument in favor of a First Cause, to which to attribute the evidences of design around me, would be sufficient, to overcome the objections that this first cause, self existent, and with no pre-existent cause, so infinitely superior to the work of His hands, only increases the logical difficulty, which the argument is framed to avoid.

Thus reason, claimed as the source of the belief in God, may turn traitor, and lead us to the creed of no God! Yet it never has.—Why? Because a power above reason, human conscience, throws itself across man's path, and turns him from the road to destructive error and untruth. It meets the traitor reason, on the soul's threshhold, and drives back the destroyer of its peace, and closes and bars its door against comfortless, rayless, hopeless Atheism.

Now, while this fact is conclusive against the idea that reason is the source of human belief in God's existence, it is likewise, I think, strongly suggestive that its source is revelation. For while the conscience is incapable of *originating* ideas in its primal condition, it is

capable of receiving truth only; and, like the strung harp, mute when untouched, it awakes to melody when its chords are swept by the fingers of its master, or murmurs its song under the inspiring breath of Heaven.

Thus it is, that this truth, once revealed, is so strongly retained by the human race. As each generation received it, this treasure-keeper of the soul, Conscience would secure it from the spoiler. To recall the figure already used; an invisible power first strung the harp of conscience, while the primal revelation breathes upon the soul and attunes its response to harmony with its God.

Whether the testimony to His perfect benevolence be as universal as that of His being, it were needless to enquire, though the attribute is generally attached to Him, in a pure or polluted form, in every Theistic system. The inductive method will easily satisfy us upon that point.

The senses of men are fitted to be avenues of exquisite pleasure; and though, in consequence of sin in the world, they are avenues to pain, yet it is evident this is not the design in their original constitution, but is a condition superinduced upon it. But, even with these evils, the senses convey vastly more pleasure than pain; and are so constructed in many instances as to refuse the latter, and only receive the former. As a test of the first proposition, that they convey more pleasure than pain, where is the man who would surrender either? Where the man who would close his eye forever upon the beauties around him, to shut out objects offensive to it? Who would stop the ear forever to sweet harmony to avoid the crash of discordant sounds? Who would yield the delights of perfumed air, to shut out noisome odors? Who would lose a limb, though racked with pain and waisting by disease, where hope even faintly promised its restoration?

As to the moral and mental constitution, the argument is the same. Who would give up energy of intellect for the feebleness of iodiocy, to avoid the fatigue resulting from the first, or the feverish excitement of high strung faculties? Who would steel himself to heartless indifference to prevent the play of sensibilities, the perennial source of so many joys? For even where grief and sorrow take the places of delight and pleasure, remembrance erases all the past, which was unpleasant, and retains upon her burnished tablet only its brightest pictures—and it is beautifully true, that the gushing waters of Grief,

on many a grassy mound, serve but to invigorate and freshen the sweet flowers planted there by the hand of Memory.

Could a constitution, so susceptible of pleasure, so opposite to and exclusive of pain, have come from a God, whose Benevolence was not as infinite as his Power?

The views already presented, must suffice upon this point, but lead us by necessary induction to the connection of the Theistic idea with religion. For it is not of itself religion. It is the *objective* truth. Religion the *subjective* relation of that truth to man. Religion is the system of responsible obligation of man to God. All that follows will serve to confirm us in the belief in the fact of revelation established by these views already adduced.

Now, as just indicated, the idea of God is most felt by man's conscience, and, I venture to say, that were it not for its felt power there, it would die out in the world. But wherever it exists, there is this further phenomenon connected inseparably with it. The God whose existence is conceived, claims through the conscience, *obedience to law;* inspires hope, as the condition of yielding it, and dread, as the condition of refusal. Search the world over, and this fact, as universal as the belief of the existence of a God, exerts a more powerful influence upon the race than all other facts, and possesses a hold upon man which he can never break. It became his companion in the dawn of his history, has so continued for *sixty centuries*, and is *now*, as *ever*, universal and powerful. It has survived all revolutions in Government, all mutations of destiny, all systems of philosophy, everything but his own soul, the Bible, and his Maker. Universal consciousness proves human *responsibslity* to God!

Let me ask in passing, who told him he was responsible to his God? Who told the Hottentot, the Greenlander, the Jew, the Gentile? Who told all the members of all the races of all the world? Reason! Its universality most powerfully suggests that it was the voice of God, speaking to the fathers of the race! Can it be indeed true that mere abstract reason can create such a dread sense of responsibility?

But whether upon this point we conclude that this sense is the result of reason or of a primal revelation, is a matter of indifference to the argument—since the *sense* of actual responsibility can in no way be accounted for, except upon the ground of its *actual existence.* For even, if not revealed, why should the Creator (whose existence, whether known through revelation or by reason, has been established

or conceded,) so constitute the human mind, as to lead it to a conclusion which produces a *profound impression* on the human conscience, the first of which is fallacy, and the last is chimera. Is it not monstrous to suppose, that he should give us faculties which must delude us, and not enlighten, and do so unnecessarily. For if not subjects of law, why should we be led to believe that we are. Nor is it any answer to say, that the idea is permitted in order to operate as a restraint; for while such a result equally follows, if the idea were founded in fact, it does not, as this does, involve the slander on the Omnipotent Omniscience, that to accomplish his designs, *it became necessary for him to perpetrate a fraud, or be privy to a falsehood.*

Thus the universality of the religious sense is conclusive to my mind, if a God there be, whether it springs from Reason, or is derived through revelation, that *man is responsible* to his Creator. In fact, the existence of conscience is a phenomenon, otherwise wholly inexplicable. The gift of such a faculty involves an obligation to use it; and where there is obligation, there must of necessity be responsibility.

This conclusion of man's responsibility is not successfully met by any argument which leads to fatalism in any of its many forms. It will not avail to say there can be no responsibility, because there can be no real free action on the part of a creature, whose nature, such as it is, is given by the Creator. That may be *theory*, but what is *fact?* Whether under the name of predestined fate, or necessitarianism, it is equally insufficient to refute the conclusion to which we have come. Because:

1st. In our inductive method, theory and conjecture must be excluded, since in our ignorance of the Divine Counsel, (and if we reason with one who denies all revelation, in our total ignorance,) we cannot assume, as facts, premises which, for aught we know, may be false.

2nd. But our inductive method *must* take the facts before us to guide our reasoning, and *can* take *nothing else.* Our gallows and our prisons are standing witnesses to responsibility under human systems, and the fate of their victims teaches human temporal responsibility under the Divine system, thus showing THE FACT, that *man is responsible*, to refute THE THEORY *that he is not.* The degree and term of his responsibility is the only question left open. If he loses life and liberty for crime against human law, then, as human law is a part of

the divine system, man's responsibility under divine law is proved to be a *fact* against all *theory* upon the subject.

I submit to any one who rejects Christianity, because it teaches human responsibility, involving as he thinks, injustice on the part of God, how can he consistently avoid plunging into Atheism when any other system of theism he may conceive of, involves the same obnoxious doctrine?

But mark the result! If a God there be, and man is responsible to him, *what question next? How responsible? For what? Under what law? Leave these questions unanswered, and what is man?* On a wide sea, with sails spread, without helm, or chart, or anchorage—his reason baffled—his conscience tortured—driven by the rough winds of heaven—the creature of God, and yet without hope—without God in the world! Left so by his benevolent Creator, whose only gifts to his creature are a reason to raise doubts, a judgment without a decision, a conscience startled with dread of horrors, which, if real, he cannot avoid, and which, if unreal, constitute a fraud by the Almighty upon the poor creature of His Omnipotence.

Now, let any rational man, with no prejudice for Infidelity, no prepossessions for the Bible, attempt to answer these terrible questions. Let him stand at any point in the world's history, outside of Palestine, and shutting out the wide spreading light of the Christian system, give an answer which shall clear away the doubts that becloud reason, and relieve the agonies of a self-torturing conscience. If he be a skeptic, let him tell me the faith upon which he reposes to dispel doubts and quiet fears. He cannot. *Peace*, as a word, has no place in the vocabulary, as it has none, as a fact, in the troubled heart of Atheism or Infidelity.

Will any such man as I have mentioned, take these two classes of facts—God the Creator, Man the responsible creature—and, therefore, under law—Man in darkness, seeking light—Man in a state of unrest, pining for rest, stability, assurance; and then tell me whether he thinks it *conceivable*, that for 60 centuries no light from God has poured a single ray into the dark cell of man's earthly dungeon. I will not persuade a favorable answer by asking *if he does not think it probable there may have been* such light, but I demand, IF HE THINKS IT POSSIBLE, THERE HAS BEEN NONE. If he does, let him frame a theory, which reason will take, as rationally consistent with the two facts already established. It cannot be done.

If then all nature cries aloud there is a God, if all humanity with

united voice confesses its responsibility to Him—the same nature, the same humanity, by its reason, its conscience, its yearning search, for truth, proclaims that He, who made us responsible, must have revealed, *somewhere* and *somehow*, the law and condition of our subjection to His will.

One other thought in this connection. Reason and conscience almost as universally as in respect to either of the other two facts already noticed, point to a hereafter. Whether resting upon these supports, it be conjecture, probability, or certainty, I have not time to enquire fully; but content myself with taking it in either light the reader may desire. Certain it is, that it has passed beyond the bounds of mere conjecture, and may reasonably be taken to be a probability.

If, then, to the ideas of God and human responsibility, be added that of immortality, an immense enchantment of interest is involved in the enquiry as to the place and the mode of Divine revelation; and a higher and stronger reason is presented, why there should be such to guide this immortal being in the pathway of his fearful responsibility.

We have thus by a simple, but, I think, fair and inevitable induction, reached the conclusion that a revelation from God to man is not only reasonably possible, and rationally probable, but is in a very high degree probable or morally certain.

To be told there is a heaven of peace and rest from doubts and fears for the world-tost humanity, is indeed to open the windows of the darkened soul to receive the pure light and air of Heaven. To such a mind, in such a search, I would say—"Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you."

We approach the enquiry, where is God's revelation to man? with the strongest moral probability, that our enquiry will meet an answer, our anxious doubts yield to assurance, and our unrest find repose.

A primary question would be—are there any evidences in the world, of claims to Divine revelation? If there were none, we would be driven to retrace the steps of our *induction*, to see where the fallacy in our progress was, which had resulted in a conclusion that there is a revelation somewhere in the world, when the fact confronts us that we meet with no claim of revelation nor evidence of such in 60 centuries of the world's history. But we are not called to retrace

our steps, for on every hand we meet claims to revelation from God, supported by various evidences. The existence of such is confirmatory of the conclusion already reached; and like the proof of prophetic vision by its after realization, verifies the reasoning previously adopted.

Amid the various claims to Divine revelation, which is the best? Because if there be in the world such a revelation, to ascertain the best authenticated, is to determine the true one; and if with the world's chart spread before us, one is presented with decided marks of Divinity about it which others do not possess or even claim, he must fix upon it as the real offspring of the inspiration of God.

If the question comes up in this shape, I submit to an audience of citizens of a portion of Christendom, whether they can hesitate to say, that Christianity presents itself with more of the marks of Divine origin than any religious or philosophical system the world has ever seen. And, if so, (a point I take, as conceded, for I cannot stop to reason it,) here is your dilemma, *either Christianity is from God, or God has given no revelation at all.* And as the latter branch of the alternative has been shown to be at least in a very high degree improbable, so it is in like degree improbable, that Christianity should not be true. Nay more—all the universal voice of nature, of humanity—through reason and conscience—the character of the Omnipotent for love and consideration for his blinded creature, his struggle for light amid darkness, for rest in unrest—these united powers of moral evidence which forced us along the pathway of our induction, to the conclusion that there is divine revelation somewhere, combine with all their powers in like manner, to shield with the panoply of moral certainty, the truth of that wondrous Book, which to the soul of man, is light in his darkness, the haven of his rest, the ark of his peace, the anchor of his hope, and his assurance of Heaven.

Now, this persuasion in its favor, as you perceive, is independent of every tittle of evidence which sustains it, except its conceded superiority to other systems.

Leaving this important view, important, because of the dilemma it presents to the rational mind of every civilized man, what form I may enquire, would Divine revelation assume and what marks would it possess?

1st. Its *form*. If without knowledge upon the subject, we would conjecture one of two modes of revelation. Either a revelation of truth from moment to moment to each man in every age, or a reve-

lation originally given to some, and perpetuated in some stable form through succeeding generations.

The momentary and personal revelation to all cannot be supposed; because universal experience denies it, and in reasoning *from* facts he cannot reason *against* them.

The other mode and form would, therefore, be most rational. We would, therefore, expect to find a Revelation in the traditional form, and to the leaders of the race, in the early stages of human history, and assuming the permanent and transmissible form, as soon as human art devised the means for so doing. And, further, if our views be correct that there was a relation in the early stages of man's history, we would expect to find in the earliest modes by which ideas are perpetuated from generation to generation, traces of this revelation.

Now, as writing in the former ages was the means which human art adopted to hand down the thoughts of the past to succeeding ages, we should expect to find among the earliest writings in the world, the mandates of God's will revealed to man. So far, therefore, from considering (as a certain class of Religious luminaries hold) *a Book revelation to be impossible*, it would be the very form which we would expect Revelation to assume. The assumption, in fact, that a Book Revelation is impossible, results in this absurdity, if true: that, *what is possible with man is impossible with God.*

Let me now collate the facts under this head:—

1. Only two sets of writings claim to be from God—the Bible and the Koran. This would give to them the preference, under this view, over all others. I do not notice those which have appeared within a century, the Sweedenborgian and Morman. When the frosts of age shall gather about them, their claims may command the respect of an elaborate criticism.

2. The Koran is dated forty-five centuries after man's creation, and is, compared with the Bible, a modern book—is an imitation of the book Revelation of the Christian, and admits its title, but claims to be an appendix to it. This is a *fortiori*, true of systems of a more modern origin.

3. The oldest books are those of Moses. They contain the history of primal Revelations made before the books were written, and transmit the perpetual Divine law, in a written form, for thirty-five centuries. The first pen invented by the art of man, was used by his hand at the inspiration of his God.

4. One further remarkable fact, showing the consistency of Bible history. Before the permanent form of Revelation was adopted, personal Revelation, as in the case of the Patriarchs, was constant, and personal communion with God daily. But when the light assumed its steady flame, after the revelations of Sinai, personal communications were less frequent, and when written Revelation ceased, because no more was necessary, the personal revelation ceased entirely, also; thus showing the undesigned consistency between Canonical history and the revelation with which it is associated.

2nd. But what *marks* of Divinity would attend Revelation? It requires but little logical arrangement to conclude that God cannot speak to man *without a miracle*. Nor would it be surprising, that to authenticate His revelation to them to whom it is made, He should manifest himself in wonder working power. How should otherwise it be known to the person receiving the revelation, that it was really such, and not a mere phantasy? And how should others credit his words as a Divine Revelation, unless they had upon them enstamped the broad seal of Omnipotence? Hence, if it is not improbable that God should make a Revelation, neither is it improbable that he should perform a miracle to attest it, unless it be *impossible* for Him to do so; and why should it be thought a thing impossible that He should raise the dead?

So far; therefore, from being surprised that a claim to Revelation is based upon evidence of miracles, we should rather treat the claim as presumptious folly, if it demanded our credence *unsustained by this evidence of its Divinity*.

And, further, being persuaded that there is somewhere a revelation, in our search for it, we should expect to see it attended by these displays of Divine power, as the attestation of its Divine origin.

But Mr. Hume contends there is an infinite improbability against all evidence for a miracle. I do not propose to go over the argument against this absurd sophism. But if it be true, then, there is an infinite improbability against that which I have shown, it is highly probable we shall see evidences of it in our search for revelation; or, in other words, it is *infinitely improbable* or *impossible* to prove what is *highly probable*; which is absurd.

So far from this being true, the presumptions that miracles were performed as sanctions to revelations, and that a Revelation has been made, create a probability in favor of the existence of miracles, and leave the proof for them upon the rational principles applicable to

all evidence. In truth, as the strongest probability exists that there is a Revelation somewhere, and that wherever it is, it is sustained by miracles, the question of the *existence* of miracles is no longer open, but determined; and the only one remaining is, as to the *identification* of certain facts in human history, *as the miracles* of whose existence we are assured by our former reasoning. I repeat, the question of miracles is no longer one of EXISTENCE, but merely of IDENTIFICATION.

The evidence adduced in favor of them must be such as will remove two difficulties only.

1. As there is only probability, though in a high degree, in their favour, as existences, the evidence must suffice to remove the partition veil of doubt, which separates moral probability from moral certainty.

2. It must be sufficient, upon ordinary principles of evidence, to assure us of their identity with the wonders we search for.

Now it is not my province to detail, but to generalize evidence Hence I gather under the following heads the logical induction by which the Christian miracles are established.

I. As already shown, Humanity demands miracles as proofs of Revelation. "Shew us a sign from Heaven, and we will believe," is its universal voice.

No system has met the demand but one. Mahomet alone reached the point of Book Revelation—the appeal of the permanent record to the judgment of men in all generations. From that all others shrank. Bnt he could only answer the demand for miracles, by pointing to the Koran as the greatest, and by the assurance that unbelief after evidence of other miracles, would prove the utter, temporal, and eternal ruin of those who required them.

What all others avoid or refuse, Christianity boldly, earnestly, meets. Faith in her creed, consists in the *heart* belief, that God hath raised its author and finisher from the dead. The man that receives her doctrine, must credit the Resurrection of Christ! Upon this, the greatest of all miracles, the seal of the truth, and the greatest, and the saving truth itself, she plants her standard, around which her followers must gather, must fight, and will conquer!

Now, when it is remembered that all the probability of Revelation equally applies to miracles as its sustaining evidence, and that only one system, which claims to be a Revelation, satisfies this probability, by resting its claim upon miracles, the conclusion is irre-

sistible, which makes a high degree of probability attach to the Christian claim, and a like degree of improbability to every other. *In truth*, as a question of mere *identification*, *it is virtually closed against all*, BUT ONE; and if there be a revelation, and miracles to sustain it, it must be that one which alone adduces them as evidence and supports them by proof:—so that the *Caviller* is reduced to this dilemma: either Christianity is from God, or there are no miracles to prove the Revelation; or, in equivalent terms, no revelation at all. And as the latter branches of the alternative have been shown to be highly improbable, it is also *highly improbable* that Christianity is untrue.

II. What is the evidence?

1st. We have the written testimony of *six* eye-witnesses of the central miracle of Christian evidence, the central article of the Christian creed; and the written testimony of two others, cotemporary with these, (who may have been, and probably were, eye-witnesses,) who speak with a calm assurance of the perfect truth of all they state. These writings are twenty-five in number, scattered over a period of sixty years after the death of the founder of the system, and in different parts of the world—indited by the free and the chain-bound captive of religious intolerance.

2nd. We have the history of an eye-witness that the same truth was proclaimed by the TWELVE in sight of the scenes of the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension; that it was uttered in the hearing of the *Sanhedrim*, the persecuting organism of Judaic opposition; that the son of a Pharisee, the converted subject of a miracle, preached it throughout Asia Minor, to the voluptuous Corinthian and to the debased Cretan; that amid the philosophic and classic shades of Athens, even in the midst of Mars Hill, the dumb, but matchless models of idolatrous art, heard the voice, which, making known the great *Unknown*, announced the coming day when a risen Saviour should become the arbiter of all things; that to the trembling Felix, the facile and impressible Agrippa, to the the household of the Cæsars, and to the citizens of the world's mistress, the bold pupil of Gamaliel spoke that which he knew, and testified that he had seen, without fear, though the chains of tyrany clanked upon his upraised arm. Nay more—he sent abroad the truth that 500 witnesses, the most part then living, remained attestants of the central fact; a statement he would scarcely have made, had it not been so, when contradiction would have proved his ruin.

In this way we gather the unwritten, but boldly uttered, consenting testimony of "The Twelve," and of hundreds of others. to confirm the written evidence.

These are the witnesses.

III. Are they to be believed?

It is *improbable that so many should concur in a lie.* Concurrence between two witnesses is sufficient in the most strictly guarded human trials—but no cause has in human courts ever been lost where a hundred witnesses concur in a statement of evidence; unless, it be disproved; or is unreliable in its nature, from interest or delusion, or from its manner; or is incredible in its statements; or unless the whole matter is unreal, a fabricated thing, by others than the witnesses, to whom it is attributed.

As to the *first.* The evidence adduced is *affirmative. No witness contradicts it.* No witness declared that he saw what the affirmers say was the risen Christ, *and that it was not the Crucified one. The affirmative, sustained by* HUNDREDS, *is not contradicted by* ONE.

Second.—Are the witnesses unreliable by reason of interest or delusion, or from their manner?

What *interest?* If any man will show me what worldly hope any Christian could base upon proclaiming the *lie*, that his dead leader was risen, I will be indebted for a novelty which I have hitherto been denied. Point me to one man, who claimed to be an eye-witness to the falsehood, who ever won any thing, but the glory, that he was counted worthy of suffering for his name. The chain, the stake, the dungeon, and the cross, these were the tempting rewards, which seduced these early witnesses, through the power of self-interest, to *perish for a Lie.*

But Delusion? Delusion exists where a man is the subject of an idea which has no existence in reality. Where the matter is one of the sense (as in the case under discussion) a man may often delusively believe he sees, or hears, or otherwise sensibly perceives an object which has no existence. But mark the test. No two men ever at the same time were the subjects of the same delusion from the same sense. The concurrence of two sets of eyes, or two sets of ears, in testimony to the same object, is sufficient to attest it as a veritable object, and to disprove it as a subject of sensual delusion.

But how vastly is the proof strengthened, when twelve men testify, that they really saw an object of a particular character at the

same time; and when this occurred several times. Is not Delusion in such case excluded as an hypothesis?

Go read the story as given by John, and Luke, and Mark, and Matthew, and Peter, and James! One whom for three years they had known—the tones of whose voice could never fail to thrill upon their hearts—the lineaments of whose face death could not steal away from memory—whose hands and side were marked, when and where and how, they could never forget—presents himself to their doubting faculties; they see, hear, touch, handle, and concur in the testimony: "He who was dead is alive again!" "The Lord is risen indeed!" Was it, could it be, Delusion? It may be true, but *not* from *delusion*.

But their *manner!* There they stand and have stood, in the World's Witness Box, for eighteen centuries, testifying to this monstrous falsehood, as you say! Cross-examined by cavillers, infidels, atheist, they still stand there unscathed and unharmed, as the Jewish youths, who in Babylon's furnace walked, because with them stood one like unto the Son of God.

With every variety of temper, the ardent Peter; the loving John; the sturdy Jude; the shrewd, common-sense, and caustic James; the publican Matthew; the concisely simple Mark; the historic Luke; the bold, learned, philosophic, heroic Paul; all less struck with wonder at the miracles, than with awe and admiration of the character of their Divine leader; every work of wondrous power, rather mentioned as illustrative of moral truth, than to furnish food to the lovers of the marvellous; every line telling its story of that glorious original, from whose presence felt and seen, they drew the historic portraits, which will be immortal; these witnesses, boldly, not evasively; firmly, though meekly, stand forth in that genuine truth-telling simplicity, which challenges the credence of unbelief itself, and forces scepticism to yield to Faith.

Such witnesses must be believed, because testifying against their interest, free from delusion, with sense, candor and sincerity, and in a manner which error cannot rival nor falsehood imitate.

3d. But it may be disbelieved, because their statements are incredible!

I answer, nothing competent for power to perform is impossible with God. Nothing, which is not impossible for God to perform, can be incredible. And if, as we have shown a sufficient motive to the putting forth of Divine power exists, it cannot be incredible, because not impossible, that he should even raise the dead.

4. But perhaps these are forged testimonies.

The evidence for their authenticity is full and conclusive. I dare not go into it at all. One thing only I may say:

A critic could draw the characters of the writers of these Books from the writings themselves. They were written by different persons obviously. They bear marks of want of combination, because *differences* are admitted, where their explanation is hidden; resemblances are simple, unaffected, and veritable, and co-incidences are evolved by critical research, which artlessly and undesignedly are uttered by different writers.

The theory of fabrication will not hold good. Niebuhr, the great historic critic, when Roman legends fell before the assaults of his acute analysis, admits that the New Testament is a Gibraltar, and its simple histories are proof against the engines of his powerful criticism.

But another class of miracles are detailed in scattered profusion through these wonderful Books, whose performance is perfected in history.

The prophecies of the Bible are perpetual miracles, attesting its divinity. They are sentries stationed upon the outer walls of Christianity, challenging history and demanding its passports. Prophecy, as time unrolls the records of Destiny, points to its passing epochs, and claims them for her own.

It would lead me farther than necessary, to make any observations upon this head. The concurrent power of the testimony of prophecy, as to ancient times and modern events, has been fully expounded by numerous writers, and no candid mind can refuse his wondering assent to the singular *coincidences*, as you may term them, developed by such expositions; but which you will see to be the voice of the buried past, speaking from the page of Divine history, and summoning to life and action the beings and events in succeeding ages, which man could never have known, but which God alone could descry from the beginning.

Miracle and Prophecy—The power and the knowledge of God, imprint upon the Bible the double stamp of its divine author, in his two attributes of Omnipotence and Omniscience. Can you refuse such credentials to his word, as his Power and Wisdom?

Now if the Book so accredited, were in our estimation *unworthy*, till we could not dare to refuse to it our belief; yet it would tend to weaken the impression of its truth, derived from the views already presented. If, on the other hand, the book bears evidence of its

origin in its preceptive and illustrative teachings, how powerfully will it tend to confirm the conclusion to which we have been brought by other evidence, that it is the word of God.

It will not be expected, nor would it be desired by you, that I should search the oft exploded mine of Internal evidence, to adduce the demonstrative proofs, that upon its very front, the Bible is a Divine Book. Yet, still, I may shadow forth one or two views connected with them.

1. Look at its PERMANENCE.

Time is the sure test of Truth. Error is short lived in its specialities, though human history shows that in one form or another it is coeval with human existence. But that which of earthly things endures for ages, lacks the characteristic of earth. Its permanence is a characteristic of His creations, "who spake and it was done who commanded and it stood fast."

Truth crushed to earth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers—
But Error wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies amid her worshippers.

Now regard for one moment the facts:

Before any known system of moral Truth, which has been taught had being; before any other book was written, this Book was in part written. *Thirty-four centuries* have rolled away. All other systems have arisen, and become extinct.

"As the old burst, new emerge—lashed from the foam of ages."

Babylon, Ninevah, Troy, Tyre, Athens, Carthage, and Rome, have lived, flourished, and died. Their philosophy and their science have perished. And yet upon the swelling wave of the world's history *one Book* survives, not as a wondrous relict for the curious antiquarian, *but as the ark of a living faith in the heart of millions*—its vitality real, and increasing—its progress onward—its march peaceful, but triumphant—its existence in the world, all essential to its well being—and its destruction, if possible, the ill omen of misery and woe. Its prime is not begun—its infancy not yet past. Upon its ancient front no marks of age appear, no chilling frosts, no winkles of decay; but its youth, renewed like the eagle's, is perennial, and will be eternal.

The Bible has more students and followers to-day than it ever had—and will have more a year hence than now.

If human, why so unlike every other human invention? If not divine, why so like every other divine creation?

Its *permanence* is a mark of its *Divinity*!

2. The consistency of its teachings.

It is a series of books from Moses to Malachi, and from Matthew to Revelation; running through nearly fifteen centuries—and yet the teachings of Abrahamic faith by Moses, are echoed in the doctrines of Christian faith by Paul; and the moral code of the former is inculcated in the letters of the latter. The prophet, whom Moses predicted God should raise up, to be heard by all the people, sanctioned the profound teachings of the first Law-giver, and melting the frigid exclusiveness of Judaism into the universal brotherhood of men upon the Mosaic law, upreared a system, whose essential consistency with the old, and, and entire consistency with itself, is without parallel in man's history.

Where in human annals can be elsewhere found the writings of thirty authors, in prose and poetry, in history and prophecy, in the joyful anthem and the waiting lamentation, in doctrine and precept through fifteen centuries scattered, which, when gathered together, will present such consistency as here, or any consistency deserving the name?

Its *consistency* is a mark of its Divinity.

3. The strange concurrence of human consciousness with its teachings, and with its view of human nature especially.

When it tells of a God of Love and Justice, of Immortality, of responsibility here, reward and retribution hereafter, our reason and consciousness approve it to be true. But what is most strange, when it tells man of his fall, he feels it—when it tells him of his entire depravity, he feels it—and yet contests the latter point most zealously in its personal application. Most men have some model of iniquity, in whom, to their view, vices are predominent, and from whom virtues are excluded. All men admit human depravity in its entireness in some one of the race, but hate to admit it of themselves. At the same time few men there are who have not some *beau ideal* of excellence, whose faults are concealed, and whose virtues are exaggerated.

Now, look at the Bible. It is Sin's Biography! not in exceptional cases, but in the best of men—not foibles, but vices and sin. Weaknesses, from the publicity of which men shrink, are there exposed by autobiographers with pitiless candour. The most faithful, distrustful of his Maker, utters falsehoods. The father of the chosen race is the prince of dishonest thrift. The meekness of the writer of the Ex-

odus, gives way to an anger for which he accords to himself Divine punishment. The Royal harper sings with plaintive wail his *secret* faults. The wise man details his unexcused follies. The cowardly followers of the Nazarene conceal not their weakness nor their stolidity; and the model Apostle proclaims the deep rooted viciousness of his own personal character.

Now, that which man would never tell himself, that which he hates to hear, and loves to dismiss from memory, the Bible authors tell of the race in general, and of themselves especially; not censoriously or from misanthropy, but stimulated by love, to reform, elevate, and reclaim it.

Can it be a human voice speaking to humanity? Is it not Divinity uttering to humanity what the conscience is forced to confess, but what the proud heart would ever conceal?

4. Its morality and its great example.

The ethics of the Gospel have been confronted with but one plausible criticism: That they are too sublimated to be attainable, too pure to be practical. Whether you read the sermon on the Mount, or the Pauline essay upon that broad Christian charity, which, by including so much more than the highest courtesy of the most advanced civilization, dwarfs and disparages it; or, gather from the maxims of that wide and unselfish philanthropy, which loves the unloving, heaps blessings upon the cursing, offers friendship to an enemy, forgives the unforgiving, and by a comprehensive rule, *limits benificence to others*, only by the need of him who bestows it; or, descending from the prime source of truth to the intermediate fountains of Apostolic injunctions, receive from the brave and inflexible Paul, or the vehement, but subdued Cephas, or the practical and uncompromising James, or the loving and tender John, or the intrepid Jude, lessons in manners, habits, thoughts, sentiments, the affairs of life in duty to God, and to man, you will find a body of moral truths, before whose meridian sunlight, all others fade and shrink into obscurity!

But when we pass from the abstract doctrine to the examples which these books present us, we are lost in wonder and amazement. I lay out of view the graphic sketches of the Apostolic Martyrs for truth; each of which, on any other canvass, would be a study for the philanthropist and sage.

Look at the son of Mary! I dare not attempt to speak one word of criticism upon such a portrait of such an original. *His* life, alone, furnished the perfect example of that code of morals of which he

was the author. The perfection it enjoined, He practised. The sublimity of its teachings was but the reflex of Him, who in his humanity was the son of Mary, but in his divinity was as truly the son of God.

Had such a code, had such a model of moral perfection a human origin? Could human thought have wrought out the one, or human imagination have conceived the other?

5. Now, for one moment, look at its origin and destiny!

Its *Mosaic* foundation was laid in the earliest ages of the world by the leader of an enslaved people, in their *Exodus* from the land of their bondage into the land of promise.

A code of morals whose purity has stood the test of thirty-four centuries, was established by a people, who, but for their religion, would have left too brief a record upon the page of history to be remembered by the student of antiquity. Its impression upon the human race has not been made by conquest, diplomacy, science, or art. The Jewish nationality was too limited to have performed any considerable part in the struggles for supremacy among ancient nations; and was indeed destroyed by the power of Babylon, upon whose willows the weeping tribes of Judea hung their silent harps, refusing to yield their native melody in the land of the enemy of Jehovah.

And when that monstrous power, which swept over the world before and since the beginning of our Christian era, subdued the Jewish nation; blotted out its place upon the earth's surface; ploughed the Hill of Zion, and cast down the stones of the temple of God—when the remnant, scattered through every land, refuse to be destroyed, and retain the indelible mark of the children of Abraham among all races and tribes of men—the ark of the ancient Jewish faith still remains, and here and everywhere in Christendom are still revered the two tables of stone, which Moses brought down from the awful heights of Sinai.

And at the period when the sceptre of political power departed from Judah, did the Shiloh come! And who was he?

In the hill country of Judea, there appeared, eighteen centuries ago, a young man, a carpenter's son, whose sublime teachings, whose noble excellence, whose supposed miraculous power exerted, in the cause of an universal philanthropy, and attested by his followers, excited the envy of a jealous priesthood, and aroused the vigilance of the Roman Government. Three years of incessant toil, and solemn, never wearying effort, to restore the Jewish faith to its *Mosaic* purity,

and to engraft upon it, in his own person, the realization of its signs and the original of its types, closed his career upon earth. He, who was cradled in the manger of Bethlehem, died upon the cross of Calvary, and laid in the grave of him of Arimathea.

This was the *Jewish Messiah*—the *world's Christ!*

A few, a very few followers during his life, fled from him in death; but rallying around his tomb, broken by his Resurrection, and standing on the brow of Olivet, hallowed by the recent pressure of his now heavenward-ascending form, Christianity gained its life from the death of its founder, and soon planted the standard of its power on the throne of the Cæsars. The sceptre which Judah lost when Shiloh came, was restored, when faith in Judah's son controlled the heart and guided the hand, which wielded the power of Imperial Rome.

And what is the destiny of Christianity?

It is the *Light of the world*—the parent of civilization. Blot out that light and all is darkness and misery. Wherever it goes, darkness flees away. Barbarism and human debasement reign where it is not. They are banished from its presence. The banner of the true and simple Bible Christianity, does not float over any people who are not comparatively free, elevated, civilized and happy.

It has left the seat of its birth—has spread its benign influence over Europe and America—has planted its seed in Asia and Africa, and gathers its rich harvests in the Isles of the Sea. It fills the sails of commerce, and compels steam to do its bidding at the press, and on the highways of earth. It unbars the gates of Japan, and breaks down the Chinese walls of exclusion—and filling her bays with the cast-away idols of Paganism, is teaching the land of Sinim the power of eternal Truth. It opens its refreshing streams in the deserts of Africa, and casts its protecting shadow in the weary land of the Arab. It melts with its tender voice the frozen hearts of Greenland, and rears its never-fading flowers in the wilderness home of the American Indian. Its voice is heard ringing through the earth, wafted on every breeze, and thrilling every magnetic wire, to all its inhabitants, in all their labors, in all their enterprises; whether on the land or upon the sea, from ocean to ocean, from pole to pole,

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord!"

Every valley shall be filled, and every hill and mountain shall be brought low—and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth—AND ALL FLESH SHALL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD!

Can any man be a skeptic longer, who looks at this humble beginning, and these wondrous results? who sees the world *marking its time* by its distance from the son of Joseph, and hasting to bend its knee at the mention of His name? Can you or I refrain from crying out, "Truly this is the Son of God?"

I shall not refer to the experimental evidence which each man who has embraced Christianity has tested, and every man who has not, may test for himself. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.

And now look at the corollary from this argument:

You will remember that it is based upon the postulate, sanctioned by reason and the universal opinion of men, of the existence of a God; upon the fact of human responsibility under law; and that the conclusion, deduced from that postulate and that fact, is, that there is somewhere a Divine Revelation, and I have then, from the evidences referred to, attained the final conclusion, to my mind an irresistible one, that Christianity is that Divine system revealed to us by our Creator.

The error in my argument, if any, must be in the postulate, or the *conclusion* from it; the *assumption* of Theism, or the *conclusion* of Revelation. There must either be no God, or revelation—and that revelation, the Bible.

How, then, stands the issue—the religious issue of the world? It presents the inevitable alternative; Jehovah or the "No God," Christianity or Atheism.

The thought, which it has been my purpose to illustrate, was the sagacious reflection of the late John Randolph. Thirty years ago he said, "Throw aside Revelation, and I will drive any man, by irresistible induction, to Atheism. John Marshall could not resist me."

If I have succeeded in impressing upon you this thought, with the power which it has exerted upon my own mind, in turning me from skepticism into the path of truth, his words will not have been uselessly written, and my labor shall not have been vain.

For who can fail in the choice so presented by this issue to enroll himself among the followers of the Cross? Who would leave the light and peace of that religion, which has advanced, and is still advancing our race; which makes free society possible; which, shielding virtue, stays the arm of vice; which sanctifies every relation in life, with the solemn sense of religious obligation; which prescribes Peace as the rule, and prescribes War as the bane of humanity;

which would fill the world with Charity and Love, and banish from it unkindness and Hate; which lifts man to higher aspirations, and to nobler hopes than earth can furnish; which assuages the floods of grief, staunches the wounds of sorrow, and pours in the oil of a serene and even sublime joy—spanning the weeping firmament of a beclouded Home, with the Heaven coloured bow of promise? Oh who would quit the calm sunshine of that hope, in which, when gazing on the tomb, hiding from our sight the crumbling objects of our buried love, we delight to lift our tearful eyes in humble trust, that there is a better world beyond—a new Heaven and a new Earth, where Death shall no more be, and where "God shall wipe away all tears from off all our faces?"

Who would give up all this—and for what? For that faith which believes nothing? For that heart, which adores nothing? For that hope which expects nothing? For that life, which lives for nothing? For that death, which is eternal? For that grave, whose portals never open, sealed by annihilation? For that joy, which is cheerless and fitful? For that grief, which is hopeless, comfortless, despair?

Young men, I invoke your decision! If the Lord be God, serve him; but if Baal, then serve him! Jehovah or the "No God!" The cheering radiance of Christianity, shining brighter and brighter to its perfect day, or the dreary gloom of Atheism, in its starless, rayless midnight!

Soldiers of the South! In your devoted fidelity to your country, remember to be faithful to your God! Enlisted under the flag of the Confederacy, let me pray you to enlist under the banner of the cross.

The Nation or People that will not serve God, shall perish: But Blessed is that People whose God is the Lord!

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